

**DECISION NOTICE:
SALMON LAKE CAMPGROUND
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
(406) 542-5500

Proposed Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) proposes campground improvements for Salmon Lake State Park (located on Highway 83, about 7 miles south of Seeley Lake, Missoula County). Improvements include asphalt paving of the interior campground road and camp spurs and the installation of electrical pedestals at the 23 campsites.

Montana Environmental Policy Act

The Montana Environmental Policy Act requires Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on July 10, 2009.

Public Process and Comment

The EA was sent out and the public comment period began July 10, 2009, and ran through August 10, 2009. Legal notices were published in the Missoulian, the Helena Independent Record and the Seeley Swan Pathfinder. There were 10 full copies, 6 electronic versions, and 79 post card notes about the EA sent to interested parties consisting of neighbors, friends, conservation groups, Montana state legislators, county & state departments or agencies, and federal agencies. Also, there was a statewide press release and a posting on the FWP website. The EA is still available for review at http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices/notice_1061.aspx.

Alternative A: No Action

If no action is taken, the interior park roads and parking areas within Salmon Lake State Park campground would not be paved, and as a secondary part of that project, electric pedestals would not be provided at the campsites. This alternative would not resolve the issues impacting public health and safety or natural resource protection. The roads will continue to generate high levels of dust during the summer season, causing irritation and discomfort to park visitors and workers, sometimes severe. The gravel surface also prohibits permanent road paint from being applied, which causes inefficient parking, driver confusion, and contributes to some instances of speeding violations.

If electrical service is not provided as an option, noise from generators will continue to be high, which detracts from the recreational experiences of campers. If no action is taken, the public will continue to register concerns and complaints about the lack of on-site electricity and the road and parking conditions in Salmon Lake State Park.

Alternative B: Pave the interior road, camp spurs and parking areas in the campground and install electrical pedestals at 23 public campsites

This is the preferred alternative. The electric pedestals would be installed prior to the paving efforts. The campground road and parking spurs would be paved with a 2" lift of asphalt. Trenching and installing the pedestals before paving the interior road and spurs will ensure resurfacing of trenching across the road's path is not necessary and costs of the improvements are kept within budget. Additionally, if the two improvements are implemented in progression of one another, inconveniences to visitors will be kept to a minimum.

Alternative C: Only pave interior road surfaces

Like the preferred alternative, FWP would proceed with plans to pave all interior road and parking surfaces within the park. In this Alternative, roads and campground spurs would be paved; however, no electric pedestals would be installed. This alternative is not preferred as it would be much more efficient to install the underground utility infrastructure and electrical pedestals prior to paving. Public interest in electric hook ups is not likely to diminish, and returning later to install electric hookups after the roads are paved would add significantly to the cost of the project.

Alternative D: Only install electrical pedestals at the 23 public campsites

In this Alternative, the electric infrastructure and pedestals would be installed; however, the roads and parking spurs would remain gravel. This alternative would be less expensive than Alternative B, but dust and associated road and parking issues would remain.

Summary of Public Comment

A total of 75 responses were received regarding this proposal. There were 55 post cards directly received from the public recreating at the park, 15 e-mails received at the R-2 headquarters, and 5 comments received by phone or in person. The proposed development within Salmon Lake State Park consisted of two elements, electrifying campsites, and paving the interior road system within the campground.

A.) Comments in support of electrifying & paving campground. For electrifying campsites, 60 of the 75 responses were in favor of the proposal. For paving the campground, 55 of the 75 were supportive of this element. See Appendix A for a sampling of the supportive comments and appropriate FWP response.

B.) Comments that were mixed on electrifying & paving the campground. Of the 75 responses, 7 were mixed. Some thought electrifying was good and paving not good and vice versa. See Appendix B for a sampling of those comments.

C.) Comments in opposition to electrifying & paving the campground. Of the 75 responses, 15 were opposed to electrifying campsites. For paving, there were 4 responses opposed to it. See Appendix C for a sampling of those comments and appropriate FWP responses.

Decision

Based on the analysis in the Environmental Assessment (EA) and the applicable laws, regulations and policies, I have determined that this action will not have a significant effect on the natural or human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

It is my decision to implement Alternative B. Pave all interior road and parking surfaces in the campground and install electrical pedestals at 23 public campsites.

Appeal

In accordance with FWP policy, this project is subject to appeal, which must be submitted to the Director of FWP in writing and must be postmarked or received within 30 days of this decision notice. The appeal must specifically describe the basis for the appeal, explain how the appellant has previously commented to the department or participated in the decision-making process, and lay out how FWP may address the concerns in the appeal. The appeal should be mailed to: Mr. Joe Maurier, Director, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701.



9/29/2009

Lee Bastian
Regional Parks Manager

Date